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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /059 W
----------112376 291227Z /50
R 280542Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4259
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
CINCPAC HONOLULU
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMCONSUL AUCKLAND POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 04882

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, NZ
SUBJECT: LABOR PARTY AGAIN ENGAGES IN BLOODLETTING

REF: (A) WELLINGTON 409; (B) WELLINGTON 663

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. SUMMARY. SITTING LABOR MP GERALD O'BRIEN HAS BEEN REJECTED BY LABOR PARTY COUNCIL AS "INCOMPETENT" FOR 1978 PARTY NOMINATION. REJECTION OPENS UP SPLIT BETWEEN PARTY'S TRADE UNION AND ACADEMIC/LIBERAL SUPPORTERS AND POSES A POTENTIAL THREAT TO THE FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF BILL ROWLING. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A MOVE WHICH THREATENS TO DRIVE A LARGER WEDGE BETWEEN THE TRADE UNION AND ACADEMIC/LIBERAL ELEMENTS OF THE NZ LABOR PARTY, THE PARTY COUNCIL (I.E., THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE) OCTOBER 26 REJECTED THE NOMINATION OF SITTING MP FOR ISLAND BAY AND PAST PARTY VP GERALD O'BRIEN. THE COUNCIL ACTED ON A CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION AUTHORIZ-
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ING IT TO REFUSE THE PARTY MANTLE, EVEN IF THE NOMINEE IS THE CHOICE OF THE PARTY'S LOCAL ELECTORATE, "IN THE CASE OF ANY NOMINEE WHOSE INCOMPETENCE IS IMPAIRING EFFICIENCY." THE COUNCIL'S RUMORED JUSTIFICATION HOWEVER, WAS THAT O'BRIEN IS "MEDICALLY" UNFIT.

3. IN A PUBLIC STATEMENT, O'BRIEN SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE

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TO SERVE THE LABOR MOVEMENT, BUT DIRECTLY ATTACKED PARTY LEADER BILL ROWLING FOR HIS PART IN THE NOMINATION WITHDRAWAL. O'BRIEN DECLINED TO SAY WHETHER HE WOULD STAND FOR THE ELECTORATE AS AN INDEPENDENT, BUT IT IS UNDERSTOOD HIS SUPPORTERS WILL BE SUBMITTING HIS NAME AGAIN WHEN LABOR PARTY NOMINATIONS ARE REOPENED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: THE COUNCIL'S REJECTION OF O'BRIEN'S NOMINATION IS INTERPRETED BY LABOR PARTY SOURCES AS BEING THE RESULT OF TWO DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT PRESSURES. ON THE ONE HAND IS WHAT IS APPARENTLY A PERSONAL DISPUTE BETWEEN ROWLING AND O'BRIEN. THIS SURFACED EIGHT MONTHS AGO WHEN ROWLING FORCED O'BRIEN'S RESIGNATION AS PARTY VP IN THE WAKE OF ALLEGATIONS LINKING O'BRIEN TO HOMOSEXUALS. (SEE REFTELS.) THE COUNCIL'S SUGGESTION OF O'BRIEN'S "MEDICAL" PROBLEMS WAS THEREFORE A THINLY VEILED REFERENCE TO THE EARLIER HOMOSEXUAL CHARGES. ON THE OTHER HAND, HOWEVER, ARE THE PARTY'S UNION ELEMENTS WHO HAVE STRONGLY SUPPORTED O'BRIEN AND WHO BELIEVE THAT HIS REJECTION IS A FURTHER SHIFT FROM THE PARTY'S TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIAL BASE INTO THE HANDS OF THE ACADEMICS/LIBERALS. THE WELLINGTON TRADES COUNCIL HAS MET TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE, AND IT IS RUMORED THAT SEVERAL UNION DISAFFILIATIONS FROM THE PARTY COULD FOLLOW. O'BRIEN HAS KNOWN FOR AT LEAST TWO WEEKS THAT THE COUNCIL WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

REJECT HIS NOMINATION. HE WAS REPEATEDLY ENCOURAGED TO QUIETLY RESIGN. O'BRIEN NEVERTHELESS REFUSED, INSISTING THAT THE "DIRTY DEED" BE DONE, THUS AFFORDING HIM THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN OPEN ATTACK ON THE LEADERSHIP OF ROWLING. WHILE O'BRIEN IS STAKING HIS OWN POLITICAL FUTURE TO A SHORT LEADERSHIP FUTURE FOR ROWLING, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT UNION DISAFFILIATIONS, PARTY MEMBERSHIP RESIGNATIONS AND DISSATISFACTIONS WILL GROW SUFFICIENTLY FROM THIS INCIDENT TO ULTIMATELY LEAD TO ROWLING'S DOWNFALL AS LABOR PARTY LEADER. END COMMENT. END CONFIDENTIAL. SELDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Drafter: n/a
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
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Retention: 0
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Review Content Flags:
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SAS ID: 984614
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR PARTY AGAIN ENGAGES IN BLOODLETTING
TAGS: PINT, NZ, (O\'BRIEN, GERALD), (ROWLING, WILLIAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7a51a933-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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